

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Withdrawn) An isolated protein, consisting of a protein product of a gene which has identity with the *ced-3* and Interleukin-1 β convertase (ICE) genes, said isolated protein having an alteration in the amino acid sequence of the product of a gene which has identity with the *ced-3* and ICE genes, said alteration corresponding to an amino acid substitution in the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4 or 30 selected from the group consisting of:

- i) F at amino acid 26;
- ii) R at amino acid 65;
- iv) S at amino acid 287;
- v) truncation of said protein after amino acid 323;
- vi) truncation of said protein after amino acid 339;
- vii) V at amino acid 361;
- viii) K at amino acid 390; and
- ix) F at amino acid 393.

2. (Withdrawn) The protein of claim 1, which is a protease cleaving after aspartate residues.

3. (Withdrawn) The protein of claim 1, which is a cysteine protease.

4. (Withdrawn) An isolated ICE polypeptide (SEQ ID NO: 4 or 30) having an alteration which reduces the proteolytic activity of the protein, wherein said alteration is an amino acid substitution selected from the group consisting of:

- a) F at amino acid 26;
- b) R at amino acid 65;

- c) S at amino acid 287;
- d) truncation of said polypeptide after amino acid 323;
- e) truncation of said polypeptide after amino acid 339;
- f) V at amino acid 361;
- g) K at amino acid 390; and
- h) F at amino acid 393.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Withdrawn) A constitutively activated cell death protein comprising an amino acid sequence having deletions of the inhibitory amino-terminal portions, said sequence comprising a portion of the Ced-3 protein shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 of Figure 6A or SEQ ID NO: 29, said portion selected from the group consisting of:

- a) the amino acids from 150 to 503 (SEQ ID NO: 20);
- b) the amino acids from 373 to 503 (SEQ ID NO: 21); and
- c) the amino acids from 150 to 372 (SEQ ID NO: 22).

7. (Withdrawn) The protein of claim 6, further comprising a subportion of the region of Ced-3 from amino acids 1 to 149, as shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 of Figure 6A or SEQ ID NO: 29, said subportion enhancing the proteolytic activity of the protein.

8. (Withdrawn) A constitutively activated cell death protein comprising an amino acid sequence having deletions of the inhibitory amino-terminal portions, said protein

- (a) having a substitution in the amino acid sequence ICE relative to the ICE sequence shown in Figure 6A (SEQ ID NO: 4) or SEQ ID NO: 30; and
- (b) comprising a portion of the ICE sequence in SEQ ID NO: 4 or 30, said portion selected from the group consisting of:

- i) the amino acids from 111 to 404 (SEQ ID NO: 23);
- ii) the amino acids from 298 to 404 (SEQ ID NO: 24); and
- iii) the amino acids from 111 to 297 (SEQ ID NO: 25).

9. (Withdrawn) An isolated protein having an amino acid alteration in the NEDD-2 protein (SEQ ID NO: 28), said alteration being an alteration which inactivates said protein, wherein said alteration is an amino acid substitution of A to V at amino acid 397, relative to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 28.

10. (Withdrawn) An isolated protein having an amino acid alteration in the NEDD-2 protein (SEQ ID NO: 28), said alteration being an alteration which inactivates said protein, wherein said alteration is an amino acid substitution of C to A at amino acid 319, relative to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 28.

11. (Withdrawn) An isolated protein having an amino acid alteration in the NEDD-2 protein (SEQ ID NO: 28), said alteration being an alteration which inactivates said protein, wherein said alteration is an amino acid substitution of C to S at amino acid 319, relative to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 28.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Previously Presented) An isolated protein selected from the group consisting of Ced-3 (SEQ ID NO: 2 or 29), NEDD-2 protein (SEQ ID NO: 28), and ICE (SEQ ID NO: 4 or 30), said protein having an amino acid alteration, wherein said alteration is at Cys 358 of Ced-3, Cys 319 of NEDD-2, or Cys 285 of ICE.

14. (Previously Presented) The isolated protein of claim 13, wherein said amino acid alteration at Cys 358 of Ced-3 or Cys 285 of ICE is a Cys to Ala alteration.

15. (Currently Amended) The isolated protein of claim 13, wherein said protein is ICE ~~and said amino acid alteration is at conserved amino acid Cys 285 of said ICE.~~

16. (Currently Amended) The isolated protein of claim 13, wherein said protein is NEDD-2 ~~and said alteration is at conserved amino acid amino acid 319 of said NEDD-2 (SEQ ID NO: 28).~~

17. (Canceled).

18. (Withdrawn) A method of preventing cell death, said method comprising administering a polypeptide of claim 12 to a subject.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of preventing programmed cell death, wherein said method comprises administering to a patient the protein of claim 13 at a therapeutically effective dose.

20. (Canceled).

21. (New) The isolated protein of claim 13, wherein said protein is Ced-3.